

NIFA in the News – Week of October 3, 2011

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In the News

Resource economics professor receives grant for research (Massachusetts Daily Collegian 9/22). University of Massachusetts resource economics professor Sheila Mammen received a \$250,000 grant earlier this month from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) for her research on improving health for rural low-income families. It is the second grant awarded to Mammen for this work from NIFA in two years. [Link](#)

New farmers, veteran farmers in growth industry (The Times and Democrat 9/23). Clemson University now has a program that is teaching people who have never been farmers to become involved in the world of agribusiness. Twenty-seven people graduated this year from the first class of Clemson's New and Beginning Farmer program. S.C. New and Beginning Farmer is a statewide multi-agency partnership supported by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture/U.S. Department of Agriculture. Other key organizations are involved, including the S.C. Department of Agriculture and S.C. Farm Bureau. [Link](#)

FOCUS ON AG: Food workshop in October (Modesto Bee 9/24). Gatherings on Oct. 15 and Nov. 19 will offer advice to farmers planning to pass their businesses on to the next generation. The Family Farm Succession Conference, to be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the DoubleTree Hotel in downtown Modesto, will feature experts in estate taxes, business transfers, land conservation and other topics. The conference is sponsored by California FarmLink with help from the University of California Cooperative Extension and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Will climate change alter state's farming? (Orange County Register 9/26). Scientists at Chapman University will use an \$848,000 federal grant to try to answer a difficult question: how a changing climate might affect farm production, one of California's major economic engines. And they will examine effects on both natural and agricultural vegetation, though focusing on cropland because the three-year

project is being funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Eco-Friendly Gas Station & Commitment to Research (Ag Info Net 9/26). The nation's top agricultural official says cutting agricultural research funding would have some very negative effects for the world. Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack it's important to build a firm foundation for the future. VILSACK: Those that are concerned about it have reason to be concerned. The research is fairly clear that when you begin to flatline your commitment to agriculture research you begin to flatline the productivity of agriculture. My hope is that people understand in these tight budget times the one place that we ought not to reduce is in this research area in a significant way because you will in essence be crippling your capacity to grow in the future. [Link](#)

USDA/NIFA provides grants to assist in making science based biotechnology risk assessments (SeedQuest 9/26). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has awarded eight research grants to study the agricultural effects of genetic engineering. The projects support the development of science for regulatory decisions and other USDA policies and programs related to biotechnology. USDA awarded the grants through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). [Link](#)

Reducing Obesity in America Calls for Tough Policies and a "Sugar Tax" (Examiner 9/26). Ferris is conducting a three-year intervention study, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, of sugar-sweetened beverages, which are one of the main culprits behind the U.S. obesity epidemic. The goal of the study is to reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages among low-income preschoolers, who have a higher prevalence of consumption and a higher obesity rate than children from higher-income families; although Ferris said the gap is narrowing. [Link](#)

UA gets \$500K federal grant to study insects and cotton (Business Journal 9/27) . The University of Arizona is getting a \$500,000 grant from the federal government to study potential insect threats against genetically modified cotton. The U.S. Department of Agriculture grant is going to UA's Department of Entomology. The federal money will be used to look at genetically engineered Bt cotton. That cotton type was commercialized 15 years ago and accounts for almost two-thirds of the cotton grown in the U.S. It is engineered to produce bacterial proteins that kill insects, but don't harm humans or animals. [Link](#)

Creating Sustainability Model for Swine Production; Research Will Increase Productivity, Decrease Costs of Production (Newswise 9/28). A new tool created by University of Arkansas researchers and their colleagues will help hog farmers increase productivity, decrease costs of production and minimize the environmental impact of swine production in the United States. With a total of \$5 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the multi-disciplinary team, which includes researchers at Purdue University and Virginia Tech, is developing an integrated management tool for swine production based on a comprehensive analysis of the many processes that comprise swine production – from crops used for feed to various

methods of managing waste. [Link](#)

UW, WSU to get \$80M to develop biofuels (Seattle Times-WA 9/28). Washington's two major public universities have been awarded \$80 million in federal grants to kick-start a biofuels industry in the Northwest, with hopes of turning trees into fuel for jet engines and cars alike. Underscoring the size and importance of the grant, U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was to make the announcement Wednesday at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. The total grant is \$136 million and one of the largest the USDA has ever made. The University of Washington and Washington State University will each administer \$40 million and play leading roles in the work aimed at creating a Northwest biofuels industry. The remaining money is going to schools in Louisiana, Tennessee and Iowa. [Link](#)

Vilsack to Make Announcement in Seattle (KING-SEA (NBC) - Seattle, WA 9/28). the u.s. secretary of agriculture visited portland today. Secretary Tom Vilsack spoke with business leaders during a round table discussion. he says under the plan oregon will receive \$426 million to modernize road infrastructure as well as a tax credit for businesses who hire people who have been unemployed. Secretary Vilsack plans to make a major announcement in western washington tomorrow. king 5 news has learned the department of agriculture will award \$80 million in grants which will go towards making aviation bio fuel. washington state has become a top research center for biofuel.

Vilsack to Talk Jobs in Seattle (KOMO-SEA (ABC) - Seattle, WA 9/28). one of the president's top cabinet members will make a quick stop in our area today. agriculture secretary tom vilsack will meet with reporters at sea-tac airport. he's expected to push for the president's jobs bill - and explain seattle's role in promoting biofuels and renewable energy. [Link](#)

Vilsack In Seattle (Ag Info Net 9/28). I'm Greg Martin with today's Northwest Report. Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack is in Seattle today to advance the nation's biofuels industry toward developing regional, renewable energy markets, generating rural jobs, and decreasing America's dependence on foreign oil. Vilsack will also highlight how President Obama's American Jobs Act will strengthen the economy in Washington state and the Pacific Northwest. [Link](#)

Two Washington universities land federal aviation biofuels research grants (Business Journal 9/28). Washington state universities will receive big chunks of \$80 million in federal Department of Agriculture grants to develop aviation biofuels, as will be announced by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack at Sea-Tac International Airport Wednesday. Half of the grants, or \$40 million, will go to a six-university team, headed by the University of Washington and including Washington State University, that will investigate turning "woody biomass" into aviation fuels. This team will work with the entire forest products supply chain, to promote the construction and operation of bio-refineries, although not necessarily in Washington, he said. The second \$40 million grant will go to a seven-university team led by

Washington State University, and including the University of Washington, to look at a range of green sources for biofuels, including trees and other agricultural plants, Vilsack said. [Link](#)

ZeaChem and Partners Awarded \$40 million USDA Grant (Market Watch 9/28).

ZeaChem Inc., a developer of biorefineries for the conversion of renewable feedstocks into sustainable fuels and chemicals, today announced it has been awarded part of a \$40 million grant by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the commercialization of advanced "drop-in" biofuels. ZeaChem is part of a consortium led by the University of Washington and includes Greenwood Resources, Oregon State University, Washington State University, the University of California, Davis, Evergreen State College and the Agricultural Center for Excellence. [Link](#)

ZeaChem, Northwest partners land \$40M biofuels grant (Sustainable Business Oregon 9/28).

ZeaChem announced Wednesday morning that the company will share a \$40 million grant with a consortium of mostly Northwest universities and businesses to develop biofuels for use to replace jet fuels and diesel. Both awards are part of the USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Regional Coordinated Agricultural Project, which seeks to establish regional systems for the sustainable production of bio-energy and bio-based products. [Link](#)

ZeaChem gets grant to expand demo plant for jet fuel (Ethanol Producer Magazine 9/28).

The USDA announced the award of more than \$136 million in grants through its Agriculture and Food Research Initiative on Sept. 28, all focused on developing regional, renewable energy markets and expanding domestic advanced biofuels production. Five regional research projects were announced—two in Washington and one each in Iowa, Louisiana and Tennessee. University teams will lead the five-year research projects but a number of private companies will collaborate on the research. [Link](#)

From a single idea, a community garden grows (Homer News 9/28). What has become a community garden project for Chapman School's 129 students began with mention of a grant opportunity in an email from Tina Seaton, service unit manager for Kachemak Bay Girl Scouts, to Billeen Carlson, leader of Troop 515. Now, even the community is becoming involved. The People's Garden Grant, offered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, offers funding to communities to create community gardens. [Link](#)

Major projects help next generation biofuels (The Advertiser 9/28). Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced five major agricultural research projects recently aimed at developing regional, renewable energy markets, generating rural jobs and decreasing America's dependence on foreign oil. Altogether, the five-year program will deliver more than \$136 million in research and development grants to public and private sector partners in 22 states. [Link](#)

UW, WSU to get \$80M to develop biofuels (The Seattle Times 9/28). Washington's

two major public universities have been awarded \$80 million in federal grants to kick-start a biofuels industry in the Northwest, with hopes of turning trees into fuel for jet engines and cars alike. Underscoring the size and importance of the grant, U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was to make the announcement Wednesday at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. The total grant is \$136 million and one of the largest the USDA has ever made. The University of Washington and Washington State University will each administer \$40 million and play leading roles in the work aimed at creating a Northwest biofuels industry. The remaining money is going to schools in Louisiana, Tennessee and Iowa. [Link](#)

USDA giving \$40M biofuels grants to UW and WSU (AP/Seattle Post Intelligencer 9/28). The U.S. Department of Agriculture is giving \$40 million grants to the University of Washington and Washington State University to research biofuels made from wood wastes. KING-TV reports Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will announce details Wednesday in Seattle as part of a \$136 million national program. The USDA says Vilsack is making a significant announcement about how the biofuels industry will create jobs in the Northwest and decrease dependence on foreign oil. On Tuesday the USDA announced \$830,000 in six grants in Washington to support and expand the production of biofuels. [Link](#)

U.S. gives \$136 million for advanced biofuels research (Reuters 9/28). U.S. university researchers will get \$136 million to develop advanced biofuels, including to develop jet fuel, by using tall grasses, woody plants and energy cane, the U.S. government said on Wednesday. Nearly two-thirds of the money will go toward aviation biofuels projects in the Pacific Northwest, including efforts to develop a regional source of bio-jet fuel for Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who announced the awards in Seattle, said the project will help promote growth in rural America. [Link](#)

U.S. Provides \$136 Million to Develop Transportation Biofuel (Businessweek 9/28). The U.S. Department of Agriculture is giving researchers and companies \$136 million in grants to produce transportation fuels from trees and grass... The Agriculture Department is awarding the funds as part of an effort to reduce U.S. dependence on imported oil and develop fuels that will have less-harmful effects on the environment than petroleum-based products, according to the statement. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the grants at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Providing that airport with renewable aviation fuel is among the goals of the project led by Washington State University. [Link](#)

Colorado-based Gevo, ZeaChem share in multimillion-dollar grants for biofuel development (AP/The Republic 9/28). Two suburban Denver companies are sharing in some of the grants U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced to develop biofuels. Lakewood-based ZeaChem Inc. says it's part of a team led by the University of Washington that won \$40 million Wednesday to study turning poplar trees into fuel. And Englewood-based Gevo (JEE'-voh) Inc. says it is receiving \$5 million to develop jet fuel from wood left over from logging and forest thinning.

Gevo's grant is part of \$40 million awarded to a consortium led by Washington State University to develop aviation biofuels. [Link](#)

AG secretary Tom Vilsack on \$80 million biofuels grant to UW, WSU (NWCN/KING 5 News – 9/28). Can trees be turned into fuel for jet engines? Federal grants have been awarded to our state's two major universities in an effort to find out. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is announcing an \$80 million grant designed to kick-start a biofuels industry in the Northwest. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack shares more. [Link](#)

Environmentalists cast doubts on biofuel plans (Seattle Times-WA 9/28). Jet fuel from wood scraps. Gasoline — or something that acts just like it in your car — from poplar trees. Sound too good to be true? A few environmental groups expressed skepticism Wednesday that wood can be turned into fuel without causing unforeseen environmental consequences. But university researchers say they've learned from the woes of the corn ethanol industry, and believe they can avoid the potential pitfalls of making fuel from plants. On Wednesday, U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced an award of \$80 million in grants for the University of Washington and Washington State University to kick-start a biofuels industry from wood in the Pacific Northwest. [Link](#)

Vilsack Makes Biofuels Announcement in Seattle (KIRO-SEA (CBS) - Seattle, WA 9/28). a huge announcement means washington state will not only be known for software and apples, but soon for biofuels, as well. u.s. agriculture secretary tom vilsack along with local officials are at Sea-Tac airport today. all to announce \$80 million in federal grants awarded to the u dub and wsu. it's to develop new biofuels. in a moment of levity, belief this can all get done in the next few years. >> i've been quoted as saying, we're going to have this done in five years. i would bet my life on it. so to the professors who are here, i really need you to focus on this. [Link](#)

Vilsack Visits Seatle (KING-SEA (NBC) - Seattle, WA 9/28). today at sea-tac, agriculture secretary tom vilsack announced his agency is awarding \$80 million in grants to the uw and wsu to create a new fuel industry. >> the real issue is finding a way to make these things economically feasible. >> to facilitate reforestation. >> reporter: tyler is a forrester. the department of natural resources is already trying to calculate how much biomass is available in slash piles like this and from other sources. at the same time, it is trying to minimize environmental impacts after an area is logged. [Link](#)

Vilsack Talks Biofuels and Jobs in Seattle KIRO-SEA (CBS) - Seattle, WA 9/28). the federal government awarding and \$80 million grant that our state's two largest universities would use to research the conversion of wood and forest residues into biofuel is. agriculture secretary tom vilsack announced the grant today in seattle. [Link](#)

The Tea Spot, Inc. Awarded \$460,000 Small Business Innovation Research Grant

by U.S. Department of Agriculture (San Francisco Chronicle 9/28). The Tea Spot has been selected for a competitive Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) award by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), the cooperative research agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The \$460,000 award is for marketing research in support of the commercialization of compostable bioplastic tea filters for making loose leaf tea to-go in mass-foodservice. [Link](#)

Turning a pile of logging slash into fuel (NWCN-OR 9/28). U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack came calling to Sea-Tac airport this morning, and it wasn't to hop on a flight. He came to hand out \$80 million in grants, \$40 million to be administered by the University of Washington and another \$40 million handled by Washington State University. The mission is to find out if a practical, sustainable bio fuel industry based on wood waste can be created in Washington, much of the fuel to flow directly to Sea-Tac Airport for use in jets. "The real issue is finding a way to make these things economically feasible," says Normal Lewis, one of the leaders of the five year grant at WSU. [Link](#)

Vilsack: Biorefineries will 'pop up like mushrooms' (OPB 8/28). The U.S. Department of Agriculture just announced \$80 million in grants to Washington universities for biofuels development. Lots o cash. The plan is for the University of Washington and Washington State University to use their \$40 million apiece and study new kinds of woody biofuel crops, team up with other organizations to develop the supply chain for financing, construction and operation of biorefineries, scope out potential forest feedstock, and even look at converting closed lumber mills to bioenergy facilities. I happened to be at Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's talk about the American Jobs Act in Portland yesterday, and when I reached for an environmental angle on the story, guess what he brought up. Yep, biofuels. He painted a lovely picture of what biofuels could do for America: Grow rural economies across the country, reduce our reliance on foreign oil, and keep a lid on gas prices down the road. [Link](#)

USDA announces funding for five major biofuel projects (Delta Farm Press 9/28). On Wednesday, the USDA announced five major agricultural research projects today aimed at developing regional, renewable energy markets, generating rural jobs, and decreasing America's dependence on foreign oil. Altogether, the five-year program will deliver more than \$136 million in research and development grants to public and private sector partners in 22 states. University partners from the states of Washington, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Iowa will lead the projects, which focus in part on developing aviation biofuels from tall grasses, crop residues and forest resources. [Link](#)

US pledges \$136m to help grow wood and grass-based biofuels industry (Business Green 9/29). The US government yesterday announced it will award more than \$136m in fresh funding to a raft of projects over the next five years, in an attempt to accelerate the development of second-generation biofuels and jet biofuels. Announcing the move, agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack said the research projects

would aim to develop biofuels using energy crops such as tall grasses, crop waste and timber that can be produced sustainably, without impacting food supplies. He added that the projects would be led by universities in Washington, Louisiana, Tennessee and Iowa, but would involve private and public sector partners from 22 states. [Link](#)

USDA invests \$136m to encourage next gen biofuels (Biofuels-News 9/29). The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing \$136 million (€100 million) in five major agricultural research projects. These schemes will help further establish renewable energy markets in the US, and reduce the nation's reliance on imported fossil oil. Agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack announced the five-year programme on 28 September. University teams from Washington, Louisiana, Tennessee and Iowa states will lead the projects, but grants will be distributed to public and private sector partners in 22 states. Each project is in some way dedicated to using biomass to produce bio-jet fuel for the aviation industry. · \$40 million of the grants were awarded to a research group from the University of Washington. The team will focus on using sustainably grown wood-based crops to produce ethanol and renewable aviation fuel. [Link](#)

Washington universities get federal money to research aviation biofuels (Puget Sound Business Journal – WA 9/29). Washington state universities will receive big chunks of \$80 million from the federal Department of Agriculture to develop aviation biofuels. The grants will be announced by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport today. Half of the total, or \$40 million, will go to a six-university team headed by the [University of Washington](#) and including Washington State University that will investigate turning “woody biomass” into aviation fuels. This team will work with the entire forest products supply chain, Vilsack said, to promote the construction and operation of bio-refineries, though not necessarily in Washington. [Link](#)

Harkin Applauds \$25 Million USDA Grant for ISU Biofuels Research (Political News 9/29). Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) today issued the following statement after the U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded Iowa State University (ISU) a \$25 million grant for biofuels research. A research team led by ISU will develop a regional biomass production system for advanced transportation fuels. The project will investigate the production of native perennial grasses, such as big bluestem, switchgrass, and Indian grass for conversion to biofuels and other bioproducts. The grants announced by Secretary Vilsack today were made through USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). ISU was one of five major agricultural research projects selected for its work. [Link](#)

UCD on board for project to see if trees can be turned into biofuel (Sacramento Bee-CA 9/29). UC Davis will take part in a project to explore the possibility of making biofuels from trees, university officials said in a news release. The university will receive about \$3 million from a \$40 million grant that the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced this week. The five-year project will be led by researchers at the University of Washington. So far, the biofuels movement has focused on ethanol

made from Midwest-grown corn. Researchers want to know if it's feasible to grow trees in the Pacific Northwest and Northern California and use trunks, limbs and leaves – or "woody biomass" – to make fuel. [Link](#)

ArborGen Named as Member of the Southeast Partnership for Integrated Biomass Supply Systems (Market Watch 9/29). ArborGen, a world leader in the development and commercialization of technologies that improve the productivity of trees for wood, fiber and energy, has been named as a core member of the recently formed Southeast Partnership for Integrated Biomass Supply Systems (IBSS). Created through a \$15 million grant from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to accelerate the supply of bio-based renewable energy, the IBSS partnership will develop sustainable feedstock production systems for dedicated energy crops, specifically purpose grown trees and switchgrass. [Link](#)

Purdue Receives \$4M to Study Bioenergy Crops (Inside Indiana Business 9/29). Purdue University researchers will use a portion of a \$25 million grant to determine the potential of grasses as environmentally responsible bioenergy crops and to educate farmers and others about the findings. More than a dozen Purdue scientists will receive \$3.8 million for their work, which is part of the \$25 million U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant to Iowa State University. The goal is to create production systems that will give growers information on how to maximize bioenergy grass growth on marginal or unused farmland that isn't optimal for other crops. [Link](#)

USDA awards \$9.8 million to Oregon State biofuel researchers (Corvallis Gazette Times 9/29). Oregon State University announced Wednesday that it will receive two five-year research grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to study wood-based aviation fuels and develop a bioenergy education program. The \$5.4 million in grant money goes for work under the Northwest Aviation Renewables Alliance, a project studying how to make aviation fuel from biomass. [Link](#)

Gevo announces \$5 million USDA grant, contract with Air Force (Ethanol Producer Magazine 9/29). Sept. 28 was a big day for Gevo Inc. The advanced biofuels company announced it had been awarded \$5 million to develop biojet fuel from woody biomass and forest product residues. The \$5 million in funding is part of more than \$137 million for five major agricultural research projects announced Sept. 28 by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. The funding is through the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

ArborGen named key member of biomass partnership (Charleston Regional Business 9/29). Summerville-based ArborGen, a biotech company that develops and commercializes technologies to increase tree productivity, has been named to a partnership to accelerate the use of biomass in the United States. The Southeast Partnership for Integrated Biomass Supply Systems was created by a \$15 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The partnership's goal is to develop sustainable feedstock production for

crops dedicated to energy production, including trees and switchgrass. [Link](#)

USDA Grants \$5 Million to Gevo for Cellulosic Jet Fuel Development (Smart Energy News 9/29). Gevo, a developer of renewable chemicals and advanced biofuels, has been awarded a \$5 million grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the development of jet fuel produced from woody biomass and forest product residues. The award is a portion of a \$40 million grant presented to the Northwest Advanced Renewables Alliance (NARA), a consortium led by Washington State University (WSU). Gevo, the only product development company in the consortium, is focused on using woody biomass as a cellulosic feedstock to produce petroleum replacements such as isobutanol. The company intends to use the award from USDA to optimize its cellulosic yeast and fermentation process. [Link](#)

2 Colorado companies share in biofuels grants (CBS Money Watch 9/29). Two suburban Denver companies are sharing in some of the grants U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced to develop biofuels. Lakewood-based ZeaChem Inc. says it's part of a team led by the University of Washington that won \$40 million Wednesday to study turning poplar trees into fuel. And Englewood-based Gevo Inc. says it is receiving \$5 million to develop jet fuel from wood left over from logging and forest thinning. Gevo's grant is part of \$40 million awarded to a consortium led by Washington State University to develop aviation biofuels. [Link](#)

Sorghum Could be Aviation Biofuel Feedstock (Domestic Fuel 9/29). Louisiana State University is getting \$17 million from USDA to study how to turn sugar cane and sorghum into biofuels. The project is one of the five announced yesterday by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, focused on developing aviation biofuels from various types of biomass. "We have an incredible opportunity to create thousands of new jobs and drive economic development in rural communities across America by continuing to build the framework for a competitively-priced, American-made biofuels industry," said Vilsack. "Over the past two years, USDA has worked to help our nation develop a national biofuels economy that continues to help us out-innovate and out-compete the rest of the world while moving our nation toward a clean energy economy." [Link](#)

UT-led switchgrass development team gets \$15M grant (Knoxville News Sentinel 9/29). A team of scientists led by the University of Tennessee will receive \$15 million, part of a historic grant from the Department of Agriculture, to study reliable and cost-effective ways to turn switchgrass and fast-growing trees into biofuels. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced Wednesday a five-year, \$136 million grant awarded to five teams working on projects related to biofuels for transportation aimed at creating rural jobs, developing renewable energy on a regional level and decreasing the nation's dependence on foreign oil. "For the USDA, this is absolutely huge. It's a substantial effort," said Tim Rials, director of UT's Center for Renewable Carbon and lead investigator on the project. [Link](#)

FPL research supports USDA's \$80 million biofuels investment (R & D Magazine

9/29). U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that Washington State University and University of Washington each will receive a five-year, \$40 million grant to help develop alternatives to petroleum-based fuels and chemicals. As a partner in the Washington State University-led Northwest Advanced Renewables Alliance (NARA), the U.S. Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) will receive \$1.1 million to pretreat woody biomass for conversion to aviation fuel. "This is an opportunity to create thousands of new jobs and drive economic development in rural communities across America by building the framework for a competitively priced, American-made biofuels industry," Vilsack says. "Public-private partnerships like these will drive our nation to develop a national biofuels economy that continues to help us grow and out-compete the rest of the world while moving our nation toward a clean-energy economy." [Link](#)

Biofuels Research Is A Good Thing (Sightline Daily 9/29) .In some cool news from yesterday, the University of Washington and Washington State University got \$80 million from the USDA to study wood-based biofuels. Congrats to both institutions—and hooray for research!! We need lots of fresh ideas and smart thinking about all sorts of energy technologies if we're going to deal with the looming double-threat of global climate change and increasingly costly fossil fuels. But of course, I'm quoted in a *Seattle Times* article today expressing some words of caution—and I think I owe a few clarifying remarks. What I'm cautious about is NOT the research itself. Instead, what I'm cautious about is *hype*. [Link](#)

USDA announces \$80M for Washington-led research (AP/Forbes-WA 9/29). The state's two large universities will lead efforts to develop biofuels and regional renewable-energy markets under \$80 million grants that are among the largest ever awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the agency announced Wednesday. The grants allow Washington State University and the University of Washington to lead research into the conversion of Pacific Northwest wood and forest residues into biofuels. Researchers say wood biofuels have the potential to help the region recover from the loss of natural resource jobs in recent years and to use existing infrastructure, such as timber and pulp mills, to serve another regional powerhouse: the airline industry. [Link](#)

Gevo announces \$5 million USDA grant, contract with Air Force (Ethanol Producer Magazine 9/29). Sept. 28 was a big day for Gevo Inc. The advanced biofuels company announced it had been awarded \$5 million to develop biojet fuel from woody biomass and forest product residues. It also said it had been awarded a contract to supply jet fuel to the U.S. Air Force...The \$5 million in funding is part of more than \$137 million for five major agricultural research projects announced Sept. 28 by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. The funding is through the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Gevo's award, which will be used to optimize its cellulosic yeast and fermentation processes, is part of \$40 million awarded to Northwest Advanced Renewables Alliance, a research team led by Washington State University. [Link](#)

Purdue receives \$3.8 million to study bioenergy (AP/Houston Chronicle-TX 8/29).

Researchers at Purdue University are getting a \$3.8 million federal grant to study the potential of grasses as environmentally responsible bioenergy crops. The study is part of a \$25 million U.S. Department of Agriculture grant to Iowa State University to study ways to create production systems that tell growers how to maximize the growth of bioenergy grass on marginal farmland. [Link](#)

Gevo Receives USDA Grant to Develop Jet Fuel from Woody Biomass (Azom 9/30).

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has awarded \$5 million grant to Gevo to develop a biojet fuel from woody biomass. The fund is a part of \$40 million grant offered to the Northwest Advanced Renewables Alliance (NARA). NARA is a wide consortium, which includes researchers from universities, private industry and government laboratories. The consortium is led by the Washington State University (WSU). The NARA program aims to develop a new aviation fuel industry in the Pacific Northwest, nearly half of the region being covered with forests. [Link](#)

Pacific Northwest forests offer biomass bounty (Western Farm Press 9/30). Two five-year projects to create aviation fuels of the future out of tree plantations and low-value wood products in the Pacific Northwest were announced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and will provide \$9.8 million in grants to researchers at Oregon State University. [Link](#)

Colorado State U Study Touts Local Potato Health Aspects (Western Farmer Stockman 9/30). A Colorado State University study evaluating the effect of storage antioxidants and anti-cancer properties of colored potatoes shows that while the amount of antioxidants properties increases, the anti-cancer properties of those compounds are suppressed. The study is funded by a National Research Initiative Grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. [Link](#)

Pork production, education focus of tri-state project (High Plains Journal 9/30).

Researchers and educators from Arkansas, Indiana and Virginia are working on a far-reaching project to create a model that tracks feed, ventilation, manure and energy use in pork production, as well as exploring the use of pig manure in making biofuels. The project will be funded by a grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

University of Wyoming receives \$671K USDA grant (Wyoming Star Tribune 9/30).

It used to be ranches were handed down in families. Ranching was a culture into which a person was born. Today, ranching and other agricultural professions are declining. To help foster a new generation of ranchers, the United States Department of Agriculture awarded the University of Wyoming a \$670,890 grant for ranch management practicum courses. The grant was one of 36 totaling \$18 million the USDA announced Friday for organizations planning or offering training and assistance programs for beginning farmers and ranchers. The USDA awarded the grants through its Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program established in the 2008 farm bill. [Link](#)

USDA awards new grants to support young and beginning farmers (Agriculture.com 9/30). USDA announced on Friday that it has awarded 36 grants totaling \$18 million to groups that will "provide training and assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers to help them run successful and sustainable farms." [Link](#)

Agriculture Deputy Secretary Merrigan Announces Assistance to Help Raise New Crop of Farmers and Ranchers (Rural Assistance Center 9/30). Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan announced today that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has awarded 36 grants totaling \$18 million to organizations that will provide training and assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers to help them run successful and sustainable farms. As the average age of America's farmers and ranchers increases, and with traditional rural populations in decline, Merrigan said that now is a critical time to train the next generation of American producers. [Link](#)

ISU gets \$10 million USDA grant (Ames Tribune-IO 9/30). In a competitive race for private and public funding for renewable energy research projects, Iowa State University has had its share of ups and downs. But in the last four years, the university has been trending toward success, capped by this week's announcement that ISU will get \$10 million out of a \$25 million USDA grant to study whether grasses and other plants can be heated to produce crude oil. ...U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said ISU's grant appealed to the federal agency "because it results in the generation of both a bio-based crude oil and 'biochar.'"
[Link](#)

Funds Announced to Support Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (Dakota Farmer 9/30). USDA has awarded 36 grants totaling \$18 million to organizations that will provide training and assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers to help them run successful and sustainable farms. USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture awarded the grants. Under the program NIFA makes grants to organizations that implement education, training, technical assistance and outreach programs to help beginning farmers and ranchers, specifically those who have been farming or ranching for 10 years or fewer. [Link](#)

Landrieu Welcomes \$17.2 M Biomass Research Award to LSU (Political News 10/1). United States Senator Mary L. Landrieu, D-La., welcomed Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's announcement that Louisiana State University was awarded a \$17.2 million grant to fund research designed to increase biomass production from sugar cane and sorghum. [Link](#)

University of Georgia, Auburn get \$15 million federal biofuels grant (AP/Rome News-Tribune 10/1). Auburn University, the University of Georgia and two other southern universities have received a \$15 million federal grant to develop and study biofuel production. The U.S. Department of Agriculture grant aims to develop a viable production system that creates fuel from forest residue, switchgrass and other energy crops. Other partner universities include the University of Tennessee and North Carolina State University, as well as corporate partners ArborGen Inc. and Ceres Inc.

[Link](#)

UT-led scientists get \$15M grant to improve biofuel (The Tennessean 10/2). A team of scientists led by the University of Tennessee will receive \$15 million, part of a historic grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to study reliable and cost-effective ways to turn switchgrass and fast-growing trees into biofuels. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on Wednesday announced a five-year, \$136 million grant awarded to five teams working on projects related to biofuels for transportation aimed at creating rural jobs, developing renewable energy on a regional level and decreasing the nation's dependence on foreign oil. [Link](#)

UW gets grant to grow ranchers in Wyo (Wyoming Business Report 10/3). The University of Wyoming has received \$670,890 to create four ranch management practicum courses that will cover holistic, system-based ranch management concepts, including production, ecology, economics and labor. The state's only four-year institution was among 36 grant winners announced by Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). All of the grants totaled \$18 million and were awarded to organizations that will provide training and assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers to help them run successful and sustainable farms. [Link](#)

UW Gets Grant To Grow Ranchers In Wyoming (Beef Magazine 10/3). The University of Wyoming has received \$670,890 to create four ranch management practicum courses that will cover holistic, system-based ranch management concepts, including production, ecology, economics and labor. The state's only four-year institution was among 36 grant winners announced by USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan. All of the grants totaled \$18 million and were awarded to organizations that will provide training and assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers to help them run successful and sustainable farms. [Link](#)

Idaho-the Corn State & Beginning Farmer/Rancher Program (AgInfo.net 10/4). The USDA has announced that they are sinking millions into providing training and assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers to help them run successful and sustainable farms. Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan. [Link](#)

ISU Gets \$25M As Part Of New Biofuel Program (Wallaces Farmer 10/5). An Iowa State University-led group will get \$25 million of \$136 million in federal grants that will go to five universities to develop transportation and aviation biofuels made from tall grasses, crop residues and forest resources. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack announced on September 27 that an ISU-led group has been awarded the \$25 million grant for a land use and biofuel production study. [Link](#)

High Plains Ranch Practicum expands into Nebraska, Colorado (Platte Country Record Times 10/6). Grants totaling more than \$671,000 will expand a Wyoming ranch management skills development program into Nebraska and Colorado. A beginning rancher supplemental program will be offered for beginning ranchers from

any of the four ranch practicums. UNL and Colorado State University are co-authors of the grant and are co-project directors. The \$670,890 grant is through the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Published on October 6, 2011 / Jennifer Martin